

Meeting report

1. The Agile Member States Task Group on strengthening WHO's budgetary, programmatic and financing governance ("the Task Group") met in a hybrid format from 21 to 23 November 2022. The meeting was co-facilitated by Mr José Acacio of Australia and Ms Philomena Bawelile Simelane of Eswatini. The Task Group was established through decision EB151(1) (2022) to analyse challenges in governance for transparency, efficiency, accountability and compliance, and to devise recommendations.
2. Following the adoption of the agenda and programme of work contained in documents EB/AMSTG/3/1 and EB/AMSTG/3/2, respectively, the co-facilitators invited the Secretariat to introduce the report on strengthening WHO's budgetary, programmatic and financing governance: Secretariat implementation plan on reform, contained in document EB/AMSTG/3/3, and further invited the Task Group to provide general comments on this document.
3. The Secretariat provided an overview of the draft implementation plan which was developed as mandated by decision WHA75(8) on sustainable financing. Member States noted the complementarity between the Secretariat's draft implementation plan and the draft report of the Task Group to recommend long-term improvements. Member States acknowledged the draft implementation plan and provided general, as well as specific, suggestions for the consideration of the Secretariat.
4. While acknowledging the time needed to prepare the plan, Member States underscored that the timely delivery of the document in advance of the third meeting would have allowed sufficient time for their internal review. Member States expressed interest in a further opportunity to comment on the plan before it is presented to the Executive Board at its 152nd meeting for endorsement, through the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee of the Executive Board at its thirty-seventh meeting, in January/February 2023. The Secretariat noted this interest and proposed that any written comments and suggestions may be provided to the Secretariat no later than close of business on Wednesday, 30 November 2022, such that the document can be finalized for presentation to the Executive Board at its 152nd session, through the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee of the Executive Board at its thirty-seventh meeting.
5. The Task Group discussed and agreed to a package of recommendations of the Agile Member States Task Group to the Seventy-sixth World Health Assembly, through the Executive Board at its 152nd meeting and the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee of the Executive Board at its thirty-seventh meeting, to recommend long-term improvements. The agreed text of the recommendations is annexed to this report for the consideration of the Executive Board. The meeting requested that the co-facilitators consult with Member States and finalize the narrative of the report and propose text for the consideration of the Task Group such that the narrative of the report could be approved through a written silence procedure.

6. The Task Group considered and approved the report of its third meeting. In closing, the co-facilitators appreciated the engagement of Member States and the Secretariat and closed the meeting.

ANNEX

Transparency

No.	Recommendation	First actions for Member States	Link to WHO Secretariat and ongoing tracking mechanism needed
T1	<p>Establish a consistent and transparent approach to the establishment of new initiatives and programmes, including timely engagement with and input from Member States regarding the related costing and future funding thereof, as well as the alignment of such initiatives to the general programme of work and their expected impact, without compromising the Organization’s need to act nimbly and be responsive to urgent and unanticipated risks, needs and opportunities.</p>	<p>Regarding any new initiative or programme established outside a resolution, decision or other agreement by WHO governing bodies (i.e. the Health Assembly, Executive Board, Programme, Budget and Administration Committee or other relevant subcommittees), the Chair of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee of the Executive Board or the Task Group co-facilitators are to identify, inter alia:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a financial threshold for costs that would be incurred beyond the programme budget, above which the initiative or programme would need to be costed under the Department of Planning, Resource Coordination and Performance Monitoring’s more stringent “second pass” costing methodology, and for which the details of the identified costing and the associated contribution to achieving the general programme of work would then be reported to the World Health Assembly through the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee or, if applicable, through the Executive Board; and • any conditions under which the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee should consider requesting divergence from results reporting. <p>The Chair of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee of the Executive Board or the Task Group co-facilitators, in consultation with the Secretariat and Member States as necessary, are to propose a process for implementing the new requirement, for consideration at the thirty-ninth meeting of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee of the Executive Board in January 2024.</p>	<p>The Chair of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee of the Executive Board or the Task Group co-facilitators to propose an ongoing tracking mechanism for consideration by the thirty-ninth meeting of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee of the Executive Board and the 154th session of the Executive Board in January/February 2024.</p> <p>Request the Secretariat to make available current costing methodologies (both initial and “second pass” to be used for this purpose), for publication in the reports to the thirty-ninth meeting of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee of the Executive Board – allowing for ongoing refinement of methodology as necessary.</p>

No.	Recommendation	First actions for Member States	Link to WHO Secretariat and ongoing tracking mechanism needed
T2	<p>Improve the process of developing resolutions and decisions, including by making information available to Member States to allow them to assess potential financial implications as an additional factor informing their decision-making, as well as considering possible duplication and/or synergies.</p>	<p>The Chair of the Executive Board or the Task Group co-facilitators are to prepare a draft decision to accompany this report to the 152nd session of the Executive Board in January/February 2023 requesting the Director-General to make information, including costing advice, available to Member States from the earliest stages of development for resolutions and decisions to allow them to assess potential financial implications and to inform their understanding of any impact on the programme budget, including availability of financial resources.</p> <p>The Chair of the Executive Board or the Task Group co-facilitators, in consultation with Member States (and the Secretariat as necessary) are to prepare a draft decision for the 153rd session of the Executive Board in May 2023 setting out a standard template and recommended timeline for the process of proposing and considering resolutions and decisions that reflect, inter alia, costing investigation of potential duplication and/or synergies (e.g. with existing or proposed resolutions or initiatives addressing the same issues); applicability of sunseting clauses; and contribution to the relevant general programme of work.</p>	<p>Request the Secretariat to provide guidance on resourcing requirements/capacity for having staff available to provide costing advice during informal consultations on resolutions and decisions.</p> <p>Request the Secretariat to provide guidance on the historical experience of proposing sunseting clauses and the barriers to implementing such provisions.</p>
T3	<p>Strengthen the role of the Executive Board and its Programme, Budget and Administration Committee to better engage and provide advice and guidance on oversight of future programme budgets; and improve the way of working in the governing bodies, including better support to Member States in reaching decisions.</p>	<p>The Chair of the Executive Board or the Task Group co-facilitators, in consultation with Member States (and the Secretariat as necessary), are to prepare proposals for the reform of the Executive Board and its Programme, Budget and Administration Committee that consider, inter alia, meeting structure, cadence, agenda management and preparation of reports (prioritization, timing and structure), exploration of the need for additional Member State engagement with external auditors, internal auditors and/or the Independent Expert Oversight Advisory Committee beyond standing agenda items, as well as proposals for positioning Member States to give strategic guidance based on governing body documents for consideration by the Executive Board at its 153rd session in May 2023.</p>	<p>Request the Secretariat to provide support (including legal and procedural advice) in the preparation of reform proposals.</p>

No.	Recommendation	First actions for Member States	Link to WHO Secretariat and ongoing tracking mechanism needed
T4	Based on the principles of results-based management, improve the WHO results framework and the effectiveness of monitoring and evaluation of its performance, including joint monitoring with Member States, strengthened institutional agility and capacity for performance monitoring, institutional learning and delivery of results across the three levels of the Organization.	<p>The Chair of the Executive Board or the Task Group co-facilitators, in consultation with Member States, are to prepare a draft decision for the Executive Board requesting the Secretariat to prepare a report synthesizing the findings of the internal and external evaluations and other reviews of WHO's results-based management framework and its performance monitoring systems.</p> <p>The report should include an analysis of the Organization-wide performance assessment and relevant accountability mechanisms to collect, systematize and provide information to Member States on, inter alia, the correlation between the allocation of resources, the activities carried out, the achievement of results and the meeting of targets and benchmarks.</p> <p>The report should be made available to the Independent Expert Oversight Advisory Committee for its consideration and comments.</p>	
T5	Improve transparency in the creation and filling of senior-level positions at WHO, with periodic reporting to Member States.	<p>The Chair of the Executive Board or the Task Group co-facilitators, in consultation with Member States, are to identify seniority thresholds for advance reporting to the Executive Board on the creation of new senior-level positions not offset by restructuring, and prepare modalities for proposed reporting requirements for consideration by the Executive Board at its 154th session in January 2024.</p> <p>The Chair of the Executive Board or the Task Group co-facilitators, in consultation with Member States (and the Secretariat as necessary), are to propose appropriate transparency measures for substantiating selection after filling existing positions above a separate threshold also to be identified by the Chair of the Executive Board or the Task Group co-facilitators for consideration by the Executive Board at its 154th session in January 2024.</p>	<p>Request the Secretariat to provide support, including on the capacities of current human resources management systems to facilitate these actions.</p> <p>Request the Secretariat to prepare a report on the achievement of the request to the Director-General in decision WHA69(8), operative paragraph 10, to improve transparency of the process for the selection of Assistant Directors-General, including through timely advertisement of the Assistant Director-General positions in all official languages.</p>

No.	Recommendation	First actions for Member States	Link to WHO Secretariat and ongoing tracking mechanism needed
T6	Further improve the results-based budget planning process with Member States, including improved transparency, information-sharing on programme budget prioritization and discussion of financing the priorities as well as improved equity in resource allocations across all levels and major offices of WHO.	The Chair of the Executive Board or the Task Group co-facilitators, in consultation with Member States, are to outline existing practice and to identify possible options for strengthening consultations with Member States on the prioritization process and on resource allocation when preparing the draft programme budget, as well as for presentation of the results of the prioritization exercise to the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee for the consideration of the Executive Board at its 154th meeting in January 2024.	Request WHO guidance on current practices and/or limitations for possible new approaches

Accountability

No.	Recommendation	First actions for Member States	Link to WHO Secretariat and ongoing tracking mechanism needed
A1	Make available to Member States an up-to-date WHO organigram, including staff contact details for technical departments.	The Chair of the Executive Board or the Task Group co-facilitators are to request the Secretariat to prepare a separate organigram (version for Member States' access) and appropriate granularity of detail for working-level contact details through a decision by the Executive Board at its 152nd session in January/February 2023 alongside this report.	Request the Secretariat to provide guidance on current capacity and/or limitations for updating information, and mechanisms available for hosting the Member States' version of the organigram securely.
A2	Improve WHO's investigations framework	The governing bodies are to consider the draft procedures for investigation of allegations against the head of the Organization developed upon the advice of the Independent Expert Oversight Advisory Committee for consideration and recommendation for appropriate further action.	

Compliance

	Recommendation	First actions for Member States	Link to WHO Secretariat and ongoing tracking mechanism needed
C1	<p>Improve the timeliness of delivery of governing body documents and information to Member States.</p>	<p>The Chair of the Executive Board or the Task Group co-facilitators are to prepare a draft decision to accompany this report to the 152nd session of the Executive Board in January/February 2023 requesting the Director-General to conduct an analysis of the value chain in the production of reports for WHO governing body meetings, including the initial consultation phase, with a view to outlining the process currently in place to draft reports, relevant internal/external consultations, and other relevant steps. The analysis should provide specific recommendations to improve efficiency and address internal and external barriers to timely publication and the necessary steps to address these, including the resource implications.</p> <p>The Chair of the Executive Board or the Task Group co-facilitators are to prepare a draft decision for the 153rd session of the Executive Board in May 2023, in consultation with Member States, to decide on a contemporary acceptable lead time for publication of reports in all official languages ahead of Health Assembly, Executive Board and Programme, Budget and Administration Committee meetings, including, where applicable, acceptable lag times for publication following completion of informal consultation processes.</p> <p>The Chair of the Executive Board or the Task Group co-facilitators are to prepare a draft decision to accompany this report to the 152nd session of the Executive Board in January/February 2023 to request the Director-General to develop a project plan with associated costs for the implementation of digital solutions for Governing Body Services' interactions with Member States, including the proposed digital portal.</p>	<p>Request the Secretariat to provide guidance to inform the preparation of the proposed draft decisions, including on flexibility/rigidity within financial regulations, rules of procedure and the WHO Constitution regarding the form and structure of reports for WHO governing body meetings for translation and inclusion in agendas with a view to exploring changes to these.</p>

Efficiency

No.	Recommendation	First actions for Member States	Link to WHO Secretariat and ongoing tracking mechanism needed
E1	Revise the cost recovery scheme for voluntary contributions.	The Chair of the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee of the Executive Board or the Task Group co-facilitators are to prepare a draft decision to accompany this report to the 152nd session of the Executive Board in January/February 2023 to request the Director-General to review the 2012 PricewaterhouseCoopers analysis on cost recovery for voluntary contributions to assess whether the recommendations from that analysis still hold and propose feasible actions for further implementing the recommendations and the suggestions to address the new challenges emerging from the review.	Request the Secretariat to provide guidance on potential costs/mechanisms for conducting further analysis.
E2	Explore developing guidelines, principles and thresholds on earmarking of voluntary contributions, with a view to increasing their flexibility and establishing deadlines for achieving the thresholds.	Request the Director-General to conduct an analysis of voluntary contribution earmarking flexibility/limitations in similar United Nations or global health agencies, as well as successful practice of incentives for donors to provide more flexible funding, to inform potential future reforms to the governance of voluntary contributions.	Track alongside Secretariat reporting and decision-making on exploring the feasibility of a WHO replenishment mechanism.